United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Two Somali UNOSOM II employees killed in ambush; Special Representative for Somalia blames General Aidid, saying such criminal acts will not go unpunished.

+ Secretary-General appeals to leading industrialized countries to give special attention to Africa at Tokyo Economic Summit; says continent needs stability, security, democracy and economic assistance.

+ Co-Chairman of Yugoslavia Conference say Bosnian Presidency must soon respond to recent Serb-Croat proposals on future of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that negotiations can begin.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina, in letter to Security Council, requests helicopter evacuation of Gorazde's population, saying new Serb offensive aims to destroy city and its inhabitants.

+ Security Council refers Andorra's application for membership of United Nations to Committee on Admissions.

+ Negotiations between United Nations and Iraq on application of Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) begin at Headquarters.

+ Special Envoy for Haiti says agreement between President Aristide and Lieutenant-General Cedras will not solve country's political crisis immediately; four-month process to assure peaceful transition of power is beginning.

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Gunmen today ambushed five Somali employees of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), killing two of them, according to Special Representative Jonathan Howe, who denounced the attack in the strongest possible terms. The fate of the other three employees was not known.

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Admiral Howe said in a statement that it appeared that General Mohamed Farah Aidid was responsible for the attack, describing him as "a menace to the safety of all Somalis". He stressed that such criminal acts would not go unpunished. The world community was determined to bring peace and security to Somalia, and UNOSOM II was determined to accomplish the mandate established by the Security Council. On behalf of the United Nations community in Somalia, he extended his deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of today's attack.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has written to Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States asking that special attention be given to Africa at the Group of Seven Economic Summit in Tokyo. He said in letters written in late May that the continent's problems must be solved for reasons of common moral humanity, for the sake of international peace and security, and for mutually beneficial global prosperity.

The Secretary-General said that Africa had moved "from fragility to instability to desperation", but that a signal from the Summit that a new approach was being considered could create new hope. He went on to say that the continent needed stability and security, which would require preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping deployments; democracy, which would expose corruption, reduce conflict, and increase productivity; and a substantial economic assistance programme accompanied by debt relief.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, today said that that the Bosnian Presidency must soon respond to recent Serb-Croat proposals regarding the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that negotiations can begin, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Co-Chairmen said that such a response could be imminent, amid reports that the collective Presidency had met today in Sarajevo.

The Co-Chairmen met today in Zagreb with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, and would meet tomorrow in Belgrade with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, the spokesman said. Earlier today, Mr. Stoltenberg met with senior officers of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and with the Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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The Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations has asked that the population of the besieged city of Gorazde be evacuated by helicopter as soon as possible because of the extremely urgent situation there. In a letter to the Security Council, dated 2 July, he said that a new Serbian offensive had been launched against Gorazde with the aim of destroying the city and its inhabitants.

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Gorazde had been subjected to heavy shelling and the whole city was in flames, he continued. The population was in dire need of humanitarian aid, and Serbian forces had prevented a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy from entering the city.

Meanwhile, a United Nations spokesman today said that as a result of the Bosnian Serbs' seizure of a fuel convoy bound for Sarajevo on 30 June, the last water-pump in that city would run out of fuel tomorrow, threatening a major humanitarian crisis.

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The Security Council today decided to refer the application of the Principality of Andorra for membership of the United Nations to the Committee on the Admission of New Members. The Committee is expected to act on the matter tomorrow.

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High-level negotiations between the United Nations and Iraq concerning the application of Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) began at Headquarters today. Those resolutions authorized certain oil sales by Iraq as exceptions to the economic sanctions against the country.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had expressed the hope that the talks would be successful, and that they would help build confidence between the United Nations and Iraq, a United Nations spokesman said. He noted that the current negotiations -- the fourth in a series which began in 1992 -- were open-ended.

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Dante Caputo, the Special Envoy for Haiti of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), today described last weekend's agreement between President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Commander-in-Chief of the Haitian Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras, as "a necessary condition" for solving the country's political crisis, but cautioned that it was "not enough". He told correspondents that a four-month process was now beginning with the aim of assuring a peaceful transition of power in Haiti and the return on 30 October of President Aristide.

Mr. Caputo said the next step in the process would be a political dialogue among the main political parties represented in the Haitian Parliament. A meeting would most likely be held next week, possibly at United Nations Headquarters. Asked what were the chances of the political parties refusing to accept the agreement, he replied: "Of course this is a dialogue and this means that they are going to discuss this agreement and the future." However, he went on to say that it would not be easy to explain to the Haitian people that progress had been blocked because of a political debate.

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